

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-24 are pending. Claims 1-9, 11-19, 21-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chase (7,092,389) in view of Havalá (US 2005/0053079).

Chase states “As seen in FIG. 5, each of premises 16000.sub.1, 16000.sub.2 and 16000.sub.3 belonging to customer 1, customer 2 and customer 3, respectively, may send frames for receipt at MSP 12000.sub.2 in the MAN 10000. The MSP 12000.sub.2 tags each frame with the corresponding customer descriptor prior to statistically multiplexing the data for transmission on the fiber ring infrastructure 14 to the CO MSP 12000.sub.4 for receipt at the ATM switch 30. The ATM switch 30 then maps each frame to the appropriate PVC in accordance with the customer descriptor 22' in the frame in a manner similar to the mapping described with respect to FIG. 3.” (Figure 5 Description) Havalá states “If the label is found, the subrouter 123i inserts, swaps, or replaces the VPN label 156 and the forwarding label 158 in place of the tag 152 of the VLAN packet 150 to generate the MPLS packet 154 and sends the MPLS packet 154 to the MPLS network 110 via a line card 128. The MPLS network 110 routes the MPLS packet 154 to the target receive-side edge router 111-114 over the preset route while replacing the forwarding label 158. The line card 128 of the receive-side edge router 111-114 receives an MPLS packet 154 from the MPLS network 110, and a VPN identification unit 129 identifies the VPN by referring to the VPN label 156 of the MPLS packet 154 and inputs the packet to the subrouter 123i (i=1, 2, . . .) that corresponds to the VPN.” [0042]

The cited references do not teach or suggest “determining that the inner tag value identifies a service provisioned for the customer site.” The Examiner argues that Chase has an inner tag value that identifies a service provisioned for the customer site. However, the Examiner does not indicate what the inner tag value is. If the inner tag in Chase is a VLAN priority or a VLAN tagid, neither the VLAN priority nor the VLAN tagid identify a service provisioned for the customer site as recited in independent claims. The cited section only states that “The MSP 12000.sub.2 tags each frame with the corresponding customer descriptor prior to statistically multiplexing the data for transmission on the fiber ring infrastructure 14 to the CO MSP 12000.sub.4 for receipt at the ATM switch 30.” (Figure 5 description)

The independent claims further recite that the inner tag value be replaced with “one or more identifiers for transmission onto the external network.” The Examiner does not argue that

an inner tag value is replaced in Chase but instead relies on Havala to teach this recitation. The Examiner states that Havala describes a “forwarding label 158” that is replaced for transmission onto the external network. It is acknowledged that a “forwarding label 158” can be replaced, however, this forwarding label can not be an inner label because it does not meet the other recitations of the independent claims. The forwarding label does not identify “a service provisioned for the customer site.”

Nonetheless, the independent claims have been amended to facilitate prosecution. The independent claims have been amended to recite “wherein a first plurality of inner tag values identify services and a second plurality of inner tag values identify subnetworks.” This amendment is supported in the Specification and Drawings. For example, “Some inner tag values may be associated with particular services, others may be associated with particular subnetworks, while still other inner tags are unused. In one example, the inner tag table holds values identifying particular subnetworks and values mapping particular services. For example, inner tag 2500 is a non-reserved inner tag used to identify subnetworks associated with a customer site. Other inner tag values 2501 through 2803 may be reserved inner tag values.” (page 8, line 24-29) The cited references either alone or in combination do not teach or suggest “wherein a first plurality of inner tag values identify services and a second plurality of inner tag values identify subnetworks.”

In light of the above remarks, the rejections to the independent claims are believed overcome for at least the reasons noted above. Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable in their present form. Please feel free to contact the undersigned at the number provided below if there are any questions, concerns, or remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,
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